the basis of intelligence reports that such exporters were availing of DEPB benefits without actually using any preservatives or chemicals in the manufacture of export products. As far as the DEPB scheme is concerned, the requirement of a declaration to be made about the use of chemicals and preservatives in the export of marine products stands deleted w.e.f. 1st April, 2002. The representations received from exporters of marine products on this issue have been forwarded to Department of Revenue for their consideration.

Visit of French Trade Delegation to Delhi

3100. SHRI LALIT SURI:

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIG1REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a French Trade Delegation headed by the French Prime Minister recently visited Delhi and held talks with Indian authorities to widen the scope of trade between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of the talks held and the outcome thereof, indicating the new items of import and export added;

(c) the details of problems that are confronted or stand as hurdles between India and France; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to boost the trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) The Ministers for Economy, Finance and Industry and Trade and Commerce of the Republic of France accompanying the French Prime Minister on his recent visit to Delhi had a meeting with the Minister of Commerce and Industry on 7th February, 2003.

(b) and (c) The two sides exchanged views on market access issues for each others products (marine products and textile products from India and wines and spirits from France), interest of the French side in infrastructure projects, and cooperation in the WTO.

(d) The steps taken to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation include regular interaction at the Government level through the medium of the Indo-French Joint Committee, Joint Working Groups in the sectors of mineral exploration and development, energy and information technology, organisation of 'Destination India' (investment promotion meets), facilitating direct business level contracts, participation in trade promotion events, etc.